Status of the implementation of the recommendations contained in The Second Report of The Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, in pursuance of direction of the hon. Chairman, Rajya Sabha published in the Rajya Sabha Parliamentary Bulletin Part-ll, dated September 28, 2004, I am making another statement on the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Labour on Demands for Grants (2004-2005) of the Ministry of Textiles. The recommendations of the Committee mainly relate to increase the allocation of funds and utilization thereof in respect of various developmental and welfare schemes and intensification of existing schemes in order to increase productivity and to improve quality in various segments under the Ministry of Textiles. The Ministry of Textiles is making all efforts in this regard to implement the recommendations of the Committee in true spirit.

I also lay herewith the recommendation-wise status of implementation on the Table of the House.

Signing of Memorandum of Understanding on Ken-Betwa Link

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): Sir, the great son of India, former Union Irrigation Minister, late Dr. K.L. Rao, dreamt of linking the rivers of the country. However, it could not materialise. The late Prime Minister, Bharat Ratna, Smt. Indira Gandhiji did not allow the dream of Dr. K.L. Rao to die. In 1980, under her leadership, the National Perspective Plan was conceived envisaging transfer of water from surplus basins to deficit basins and in 1982, the Central Government, through a Resolution, constituted a society known as the National Water Development Agency (NWDA). To study the feasibility of the interlinking of rivers proposals suggested in the NPP. The late Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhiji desired to identify the links both in the Himalayan and in the Peninsular Zones and directed NWDA to take a leading role. The NWDA began their task of identifying the links since late 1980s and identified 30 links, 16 under Peninsular component and 14 under Himalayan component for preparation of feasibility reports in line with the proposal of NPP. Meanwhile, during a hearing in a PIL in the hon. Supreme Court during the tenure of the NDA Government on a different issue of Yamuna river's pollution, the *amicus curie* requested the hon. Court to give

a direction to the Central Government to consider the networking of rivers. The hon. Court directed to treat this issue as an independent PIL with cause title 'Networking of Rivers' and directed the Centre and States to respond.

Accordingly, the NDA Government headed by the then hon. Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji, formed a Task Force, headed by the hon. Member of Lok Sabha, Shri Suresh Prabhu. The Task Force submitted their Report on time, but could not evolve consensus amongst the political leadership of the country together or for any link bilaterally. The UPA Government, in their Common Minimum Programme, gave special emphasis, based on discussion and decision, in a fully consultative manner to identify and confine the linking policy within the peninsular zone.

Accordingly, within the completion of first year of the UPA Government, we have finally concluded the Memorandum of Understanding between two States, after prolonged negotiations at various levels, that is, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to have the Detailed Project Report of Ken-Betwa link, which is the first river link of India. Uttar Pradesh had some definite reservations on certain issues which they would like to address at the DPR stage. This is a historic decision and a step forward to fulfil the dream of late Dr. K.L Rao and the architect of the National Perspective Plans, late Smt. Indira Gandhiji, through the sustained efforts of the UPA Government.

The Ken-Betwa link proposal will benefit both the States in their districts, namely, Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Panna, Raisen and Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh and Hamirpur, Jhansi and Banda in Uttar Pradesh by way of increased and stabilised irrigation, consequent increase in the production of food and commercial crops, improved availability of drinking water, flood and drought mitigation and other increased economic activities like pisciculture, afforestation, tourism, generation of hydropower and ecological improvement programmes. This link will ensure an overall development of the region.

I thank the engineers and technicians of NWDA, which began its journey in 1982 under the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi. I profoundly thank the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, for his sustained intervention and interest in this matter. It is needless to mention that to implement the Common Minimum Programme's one of the key issue the initiative and support of the Chairperson of the National Advisory Council, Smt. Sonia

Gandhiji, had motivated us to make the breakthrough. I also thank the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, and the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Shri Babulal Gaur, for their cooperation and consent for the Detailed Project Report, based on this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today, that is, 25.8.2005.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned till 11.00 a.m. on Monday, the 29th August, 2005.

The House then adjourned at twenty-eight minutes past five of the clock, till eleven of the clock on 29th August, 2005.